

Bethel Church Global Ministry Priorities

1. Strategic Focus 2. Unreached People Groups 3. Global City Focus
4. Leadership Development 5. Missional Living

Executive Summary

The following global priorities are meant to be a guiding force for the ministry of Bethel Church worldwide. Our hope is that these priorities will help Bethel Church go beyond support to active participation in what God is doing around the world.

1. Strategic

Our resources of time, money and personnel are limited; therefore, we must be strategic in how we go about our mission. The avenues of participation in mission are near limitless, but to be effective Bethel needs to focus on a few strategic ministries. If we do not limit our focus, we risk becoming spread too thin and becoming ineffective.

2. Unreached People Groups

Bethel longs for the fulfillment of Revelation 5:9-10; that every tribe, language, people and nation would be worshipping our Lord. In keeping with this vision, we want to focus a larger portion of our resources to the areas of the world with the lack of Gospel witness or a heightened resistance to it.

3. Global City Focus

If we desire to reach the uttermost parts of the earth with the hope of Jesus Christ, we need to utilize the city as an avenue to the Unreached People Groups. The task of taking the Gospel to every village and town in the world seems daunting, but with the reality of urbanization, the spread of technology and the ever-increasing connectedness of the world; the task comes into clearer focus.

4. Leadership Development

The task of making disciples of all nations cannot be shouldered by a small group of individuals; new generations of leaders must continually be developed. Bethel desires to support the training of mature, God-fearing men to lead the church in their context. Bethel seeks to focus on training godly leaders in her own body, as well as globally.

5. Missional

Bethel, in desiring people to live on mission 24/7, will have to create simple, easy ways for people to engage in ministry. We will need to break down the barriers that stop people from participating in the Great Commission. This means training on evangelism, gospel neighboring, community development, cultural intelligence and theology will be a priority for Bethel. As Bethel moves to becoming a more mission focused body in all aspects of life; it is an opportunity for global ministry to become interwoven into our normal mode of operations.

Priorities for Bethel Global Ministry

Going Beyond Support to Active Participation

1. Strategic Focus

We need to have a sense of urgency about our mission. The return of our King is imminent and with that comes the judgment of the world. Our resources of time, money and personnel are limited; therefore, we must be strategic in how we go about our mission. The avenues of participation in mission are near limitless¹, but to be effective Bethel needs to focus on a few strategic ministries. If we do not limit our focus, we risk becoming spread too thin and becoming ineffective.

A strategic focus will enable us to mobilize the congregation more effectively. It will provide vision for active involvement outside of the missionary care team. A strategic focus will give direction to accepting and declining new missionary and short term trip applications. It will also guide our planning of Bethel hosted short term trips, giving us an overall vision to work under. This narrowed focus, combined with our other priorities, will help bring our congregation into the global mission.

Here is an example of what we mean by narrowing our focus. Let's say there are ten unbelievers left in the world and 20 Christians. One of the Christians has a heart for all ten unbelievers to come to know the Lord. He begins to minister to each one, but with so many to minister to he can only do a few minutes with each one every week. He is spread too thin.

What if instead he chose one unbeliever to mentor? That enabled him to have 10x the impact on that one unbeliever. Since the Christian took a narrowed focus, he was able to disciple the unbeliever to maturity. He encouraged the other 19 Christians to choose one of the other 9 unbelievers to focus on. Through a united, strategic and narrowed focus, they reached all 10 unbelievers in a much shorter timeframe.

¹ In our two meetings we came up with the following pathways to pursue: children, orality, Bible translation, social justice, orphans, national leadership training, business as mission, Islam, house church movement, story-telling, medical and health-care development, community development, ESL, internet evangelism, college students, local as global, global city focus, pure discipleship focus, seminaries, adopt a people group and prayer...20+ pathways. This is not including all the country and people group combinations we could develop.

2. Unreached People Groups

Bethel longs for the fulfillment of Revelation 5:9-10; that every tribe, language, people and nation would be worshipping our Lord.² In keeping with this vision, we want to focus a larger portion of our resources to the Unreached People Groups areas of the world.³ We also recognize that the global trend of urbanization and globalization have brought many previously unreached people groups to the cities, including Chicago and Northwest Indiana

We will need to research the different groups that call Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland home. By choosing a few strategic groups we will be able to nurture their church in Northwest Indiana. We will have a longer term vision of using our new connections as the launching pad for reaching their homeland. Bethel is able to strategically place herself in the cities of the world by starting right here in Northwest Indiana. We will be best suited to narrow our focus on a select few groups, rather than becoming lost in the myriad of people groups.

God has brought many groups to our doorstep through immigration. Bethel needs to be an expert on the movement of people into her community. Bethel, more than the government or business, should be the ones knowledgeable about the political, economic and socio-cultural issues that come with a diverse population. We need to study the city and study the people that we may act wisely.

Bethel's ministry to these groups can start small, as we learn more about the people living here. We already offer many ministries to help with the assimilation process; RIM, ESL and BCRN. Bethel also has members from these people groups, and they can offer experience and contacts that will help us in our ministry. We can provide cultural training and experiences for our body in each of the chosen groups. The how of ministry will develop once we interact with and learn from the people within these groups.

² "And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priest to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."" Revelation 5:9-10 [ESV]

³ Unreached People Groups can be defined as any area that is lacking proper resources in church planting, leadership development and church growth. These areas may be marked by a lack of a gospel witness or a heightened resistance to it.

3. Global City Focus

For the first time in recorded history, more people live in urban areas and cities than in rural areas.⁴ In fact, the trend of urbanization is only increasing and shows no signs of slowing.⁵ This however, opens the door of possibilities for the Church's mission. The Apostle Paul often used strategic centers as a regional platform to share the message of Christ. After Paul had spent two years teaching in the Hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus, Luke says that all of Asia had heard the Gospel.⁶ What a bold claim to make unless we understand the importance of cities as cultural hubs for a broader population.

People come from the rural areas to the city for commerce and in turn leave with the new ideas of the day.⁷ Paul utilized the city as a hub of cultural influence to have a broader, more far-reaching ministry. He did not have to travel to the thousands of tiny villages and towns of the Roman Empire, just to the major trade cities that dotted the landscape. The message naturally disseminated to the outlying towns as news spread of this great news of Jesus Christ.

If we desire to reach the uttermost parts of the earth with the hope of Jesus Christ, we need to utilize the city as an avenue to the Unreached People Groups. The task of taking the Gospel to every village and town in the world seems daunting, but with the reality of urbanization, the spread of technology and the ever-increasing connectedness of the world; the task comes into clearer focus.

The city focus, being so new to Bethel, will develop as we improve our connections with our global partners and create new connections in our own community. It is our hope that the ministry we begin to the immigrant population here will be transferred overseas. If we want to have a great impact on each people group in Northwest Indiana we will need to have an impact in their important cities.

⁴ "Cities are crucially important for the human future and for world mission. Half the world now lives in cities. Cities are where four major kinds of people are most to be found: (i) the next generation of young people; (ii) the most unreached peoples who have migrated; (iii) the culture shapers; (iv) the poorest of the poor." Excerpt from The Cape Town Commitment (2010), Part 2, Section IV Discerning the Will of Christ for World Evangelization, Point 4: Cities, <http://www.lausanne.org/ctcommitment#p2-4>,

⁵ To Transform a City, Eric Swanson & Sam Williams, page 25. Not only are more people currently living in an urban setting rather than a rural setting but the trend is continually towards urban in an ever increasing global trend called urbanization.

⁶ Acts 19:1-10 [ESV], v9b-10 "...reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Paul chose strategic cities to proclaim Christ, knowing that the message would naturally disperse to the outlying areas as commerce continued to and from the city. Paul is so confident in this that he actually claims that all the residents of Asia had heard the word of the Lord because of his time in the hall of Tyrannus.

⁷ "Furthermore, because of the strategic nature of cities as centers of influence, business and finance, hubs of communication and transportation, education, entertainment, power and influence, to reach the world for Christ we will have to not merely include urban ministry but prioritize it." excerpt from Towards the Transformation of our Cities/Regions, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 37, page 9, http://www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP37_IG8.pdf

4. Leadership Development

The task of making disciples of all nations cannot be shouldered by a small group of individuals; new generations of leaders must continually be developed.⁸ Bethel desires to support the training of mature, God-fearing men to lead the church in their context.⁹ Bethel seeks to focus on training godly leaders in her own body, as well as globally.¹⁰

Bethel has done a great job of selecting four training institutions in four regions of the world.¹¹ Bethel, desiring to further deepen her relationships and create an environment of reciprocity, realizes that four schools may be outside our capacity for depth. We will embark on evaluating our current partnerships and increase and reduce support as led.

Partnerships will be evaluated much like the individual missionaries. They will be rated on personal effectiveness and affinity to Bethel's Strategic Plan. Those partnerships scoring highly will be given greater support and attention. This is not to dismiss the work of the other institutions, but rather to enable us to have a narrowed focus globally.

Our global partnerships in leadership development can help us pursue our mission by training people overseas and also help Bethel train local leaders from those people groups in Northwest Indiana.

⁸ 2 Timothy 2:2; "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

⁹ The Cape Town Commitment (2010), Part 2, Section IV Discerning the Will of Christ for World Evangelization, Point 3: Christ-centered leaders

¹⁰ Bethel embarked on a yearlong male leadership program called The Barnabas Project ending in May 2011.

¹¹ Bethel worked closely with [Overseas Council](#) to select the first 3 schools: SETECA in Latin America [Guatemala], TECT in Africa [Sierra Leone], ABTS in the Middle East [Lebanon] and LOGOS in Southwest Asia [India].

5. Missional Living

It is our hope to move from a church with missions to being a church on mission.¹² Bethel must focus on engaging the entire church body in mission¹³, here in Northwest Indiana and around the world.¹⁴ Bethel believes by having a “local is global” mindset we will be able to excite more people for global ministry as they can participate in their neighborhood.¹⁵

God has blessed Bethel with many gifted people.¹⁶ We must begin to examine what God has specifically crafted us to do. Bethel’s efforts should align with the giftedness of our leadership and body. We will conduct a skills assessment and inventory for interested members. This can be used for a broad range of applications, both in Northwest Indiana and around the world. By creating opportunities for ministry that utilize people’s gifts, we should be able to motivate a greater number of people for mission. We will also start to teach people to use their career, hobbies and passions as avenues for ministry.

Bethel, in desiring people to live on mission 24/7, will have to create simple, easy ways for people to engage in ministry. We will need to break down the barriers that stop people from participating in the Great Commission. This means training on evangelism, gospel neighboring, community development, cultural intelligence and theology will be a priority for Bethel. As Bethel moves to becoming a more mission focused body in all aspects of life; it is an opportunity for global ministry to become interwoven into our normal mode of operations. It should no longer be separate thing for the specially called.

It is our best option to provide local ways to interact with and minister to a global population. This will start small with cultural training, visits to local sites, meals at strategic restaurants and other simple activities. We need to be a church that welcomes immigrants with open arms, learns their culture and seeks their well-being. These local relationships will be key to our broader global effort.

¹² “Thus our challenge today is to move from church with mission to missional church.” Excerpt from *Missional Church*, Guder, page 6.

¹³ Matthew 28:18-20; “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

¹⁴ “No one can say: ‘Since I’m not called to be a missionary, I do not have to evangelize my friends and neighbors.’ There is no difference, in spiritual terms, between a missionary witnessing in his home town and a missionary witnessing in Katmandu, Nepal.” Excerpt from *On Being a Missionary*, Thomas Hale, page 6.

¹⁵ “However, we as believers need to be much more intentional in finding out and meeting the needs of those in our own neighborhood so that every person knows someone who truly follows Christ.” excerpt from *Priorities in World Evangelization* (2006), Lausanne Strategy Working Group, Priority #10

¹⁶ 1 Peter 4:10; “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” It is the belief of Bethel that every Christian has been endowed with a spiritual gift to use for the building up the church in service.